

IN THE CLAIMS

**Please cancel claims 1-20 without prejudice to their consideration in a continuing application.**

**Please enter claims 21-30 as follows:**

1-20 (cancelled)

21. (new) A spinal implant system comprising:
- a vertebral anchor having a shank with a first unthreaded portion ;
  - a spinal implant rod having a second unthreaded portion ;
  - a compressible ring, said compressible ring defining an aperture to receive the unthreaded portion of said spinal implant rod;
  - a clamp, said clamp having first and second arms, said first arm having a first channel and said second arm having a second channel,; and
  - a collet, said collet positioned inside the first and second channels of said clamp, said collet defining a socket to hold the unthreaded portion of said vertebral anchor,
- wherein said collet is adjustably anchorable among a plurality of positions along the length of the first unthreaded portion of said anchor, and said ring is adjustably anchorable among a plurality of positions along the length of the second unthreaded portion of said rod.
22. (new) The connection assembly of claim 21 wherein said collet has a threaded end, and which further comprises a nut, said nut threadably engaged to the threaded end of said collet.

23. (new) The connection assembly of claim 21, wherein one said channel of said clamp has a straight internal taper in at least a portion of said one channel.

24. (new) The connection assembly of claim 23, wherein a portion of said collet has a straight outside taper and the inside taper of the second arm of said clamp is complementary shaped to the taper of said collet.

25. (new) The connection assembly of claim 21, wherein said compressible ring has at least a partially spherical exterior and the channel of said clamp has a substantially mating concave surface.

26. (new) The connection assembly of claim 21, wherein the collet has three or more slots near the second end of said collet.

27. (new) The connection assembly of claim 21, wherein at least one channel of said clamp has a sidewall and wherein at least a portion of the sidewall includes at least one edge to bear against the outside of said compressible ring.

28. (new) The connection assembly of claim 21, wherein said compressible ring is split.

29. (new) The connection assembly of claim 28, wherein said compressible ring has an exterior surface and wherein said compressible ring also includes a groove in the exterior surface.

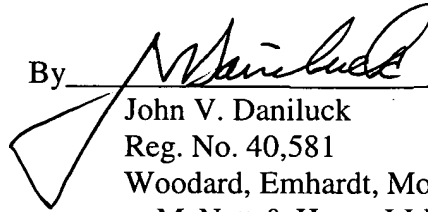
30. (new) The connection assembly of claim 21, wherein said collet has an end and at least one slot near the end, and wherein said compressible ring is split.

## CLOSING

Applicant has cancelled claims 1-20 and entered new claims 21-30. Applicant respectfully requests examination of the above-referenced patent application. The undersigned welcomes a telephonic interview with the Examiner, if the Examiner believes that such an interview would facilitate resolution of any outstanding issues.

Respectfully submitted,

By



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PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

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Page 6 of 6